1908.

TO THE URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL OF OLD FLETTON.

In the Administrative County of Huntingdon.

Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health.

For the Year ending December 31st, 1908.

Presented to a Meeting of the Council, held on Monday, the 8th day of March, 1909.

MR. CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN,

In submitting to you my third Annual Report as Medical Officer of Health for the District you represent, I am placed in the unhappy position of saying Good-bye. Although my time with you has been short, it is has been long enough for me to have fully and deeply appreciated you individually, as well as collectively. I have not found you a hard taskmaster. You have permitted me to perform my work in my own way, without fault finding, without the display of red-tape, and finally, you have taken from me the painful feelings of saying farewell by unanimously appointing my son, Dr. Alec, to become my successor. For all these felicities I thank you most sincerely.

Regarding the Report for 1908 :—I find myself somewhat analagous to the dying swan of whom it is said " His last song is the sweetest he sings." My last report is the best I have penned. You will observe, from the tables which accompany the Report, that while the Birth Rate is maintained in proportion to the population, the Death Rate generally is considerably reduced. Taking the population at 4,300 the Birth Rate per 1000 is 30·2, while the Death Rate is 9·7.

The Death Rate of England and Wales is ...	14·7
76 Great Towns is	15·8
The Birth Rate of England and Wales is ...	26·5
76 Great Towns is	27
Fletton Urban	30·2

These facts and figures are very satisfactory, but the best of all is the phenomenal reduction in the infantile death rate. Last year only five babies under one year died, and not one of them from premature birth. This gives the rate of infantile mortality for every thousand births as 38·6.

While England and Wales was	121·0
76 Great Towns	128·0

Births.—Mr. Peach, the Registrar for the District returns the births for the past year as 130.

Last year 1907	150
1906	160

Estimating the population to be 4,300 the rate per thousand would

Last year	33·3

Of the 130 births, those born in Fletton were 46.
" " Stanground 37.
" " Woodstone 47.

Deaths.—The number of deaths for the year was 42, two less than in

This shows the rate per thousand to be	9·7
Last year the rate was	9·8
England and Wales, this year is ...	14·7
And 76 great towns, the rate is ...	15·8

Ages at Death.—Under 1 year	... ...	5
1 to 5 years	... ...	5
5 to 15 years	... ...	1
15 to 25 years	... ...	1
25 to 65 years	... ...	13
65 upwards	... ...	17
	Total	42

Wards in which the deaths occurred,	Fletton	17
	Stanground ...	15
	Woodstone ...	10
	Total	42

The great reduction in Infantile Mortality, in my opinion, is due to the Mother's "wetnursing" their babies, and keeping them clean. Were these two measures more fully exercised generally there would be less "slaughter of the innocents." No finer children have I seen, in about 40 years practice, than those fed exclusively at their Mother's breasts up to 18 months. The weaning process should not begin until this age is attained.

Infectious Diseases (Notifiable).—Nineteen cases were reported during the year, three or four of these were sent to the Isolation Hospital in Peterborough, the others were treated at their homes, being isolated as far as possible from other members of the family. I am pleased to report that no fatal case occurred.

Of these 19 cases, 9 were Scarlatina.
6 ,, Diphtheria.
4 ,, Erysipelas.

You will observe the very great reduction of Infectious Notifiable Diseases. Last year the number reported was 47.

Factories.—After many hopeful rumours I regret to have still to use the singular number under the above heading. Of your one factory I have nothing but good to state. It gives employment to a great many of the girls in the neighbourhood who otherwise might be idle. The houses where peapicking was conducted were visited and found in fair order. In no house was there any case of infectious disease. A list of the houses was sent by Messrs. Farrow & Son in accordance with the regulations.

Hospital Isolation.—Several cases of Scarlatina were sent to the Isolation Hospital in Peterborough, the majority of these, not because they serious, but from the fact of their mothers being recently confined.

Water Supply.—The District has been fairly well attended to regarding the Water Supply. The Braceborough water is somewhat hard from lime, but it is clear, free from organic impurities, and although not pleasant to wash with, is wholesome to drink. There is one important drawback to this water, and one that ratepayers, in these hard times must consider and that is the price of it.

:er is so plentiful in your District, and is of so good quality that one does urprised at the question being mooted, why should this water not be used the present Braceborough? Yes, why?

duties as your Medical Officer of Health end with this report, but before own the curtain I may be permitted to take a retrospective glance at the improvements and their results during the 14 years I have held the office of Officer of Health for the District. First for the Norman Cross and during the years for the Fletton Urban District.

This is not with the intention of blowing the trumpet of anyone, but to point out by facts and figures that the money of the Ratepayers has not been mis-spent. It has been spent chiefly in :

1st. Improving the Roads.
2nd. Purifying the Streams.
3rd. Bringing in wholesome Water.
4th. Last, but not least, in constructing Sewerage and Sewage Works.

Improving the Roads.—There need be no exaggeration in the great change for the better in the condition of the roads now, compared with what they were ten years ago. The roads in your district are now, almost without exception, up to the mark, even St. Margaret's Road can claim to be as good as its neighbours, and when Conygree Road is touched up a bit, your roads will bear fair criticism and favourable comparison with the past.

Purifying the Streams.—Here too you can claim improvement, and to a considerable extent there is a very marked contrast in the condition at present and that of ten years ago. In the warm summer weather the Lodes were filthy, stinking cesspools, festering hotbeds of disease, full of microbes of almost every kind. These were scattered about during the winter floods with no good to anyone but doctors and undertakers. To a considerable extent the Love Lane Lode has been built in and a footpath constructed over it, to the great improvement of the road and the atmosphere.

The Stanground Lode is not yet perfect, but can be favourably compared with its condition a decade ago. With bricks so cheap and labourers so plentiful the present seems a favourable time to cover in a part of it. This would be a blessing to some of the unemployed, and a benefit to the community generally.

Bringing in a supply of wholesome Water.—Ten years ago only part of your District was provided with water. Since then the Braceborough water has been introduced to Woodstone Hill, Belsize Avenue, New Road, St. Margaret's Road, to several new streets in Old Fletton, and in Stanground as far as Mr. Itter's cottages, almost halfway to Farcet.

Constructing Sewerage and Sewage Works.—This is by far the most important improvement that has been accomplished during my term of office. No doubt it was carried out at a considerable outlay of money, but a system of Sewerage was absolutely necessary, and the Sewage from so large a community had to be removed and dealt with. No better proof of its necessity need be offered than the immediate beneficial effect upon the Death Rate, and on the health of the people generally, as soon as the works were finished.

Most of the improvements were the work of the Norman Cross Council, and they are worthy of the greatest credit for their labours. You may congratulate yourselves on the fact that the leading spirits in the instigation and accomplishment of these valuable improvements are at present members of your own Council.

I am, Gentlemen,

Yours faithfully,

JOHN A. ROBERTSON, M

Medical Offic

1908.

The URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL
of OLD FLETTON.

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health.

W. H. Pentney, Printer, Peterborough.